

# INDEXA



Fall 2002

Issue 59

A non-profit organization for the enhancement of amateur radio, worldwide peace, and friendship  
Daily Information Session—14.236 @ 23:30Z

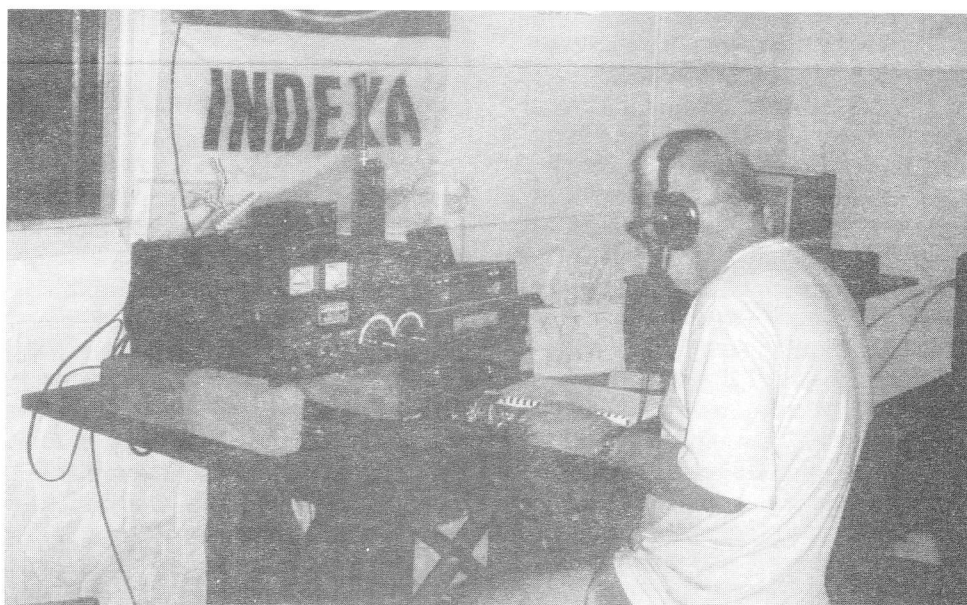
## Myanmar—2002 *by Greg Fisser, DF2IC*

**T**he Land of the Golden Pagodas! That is what Myanmar, or Burma, is called and when you approach the Yangon International Airport that is what you see: dozens of golden pagodas reflecting the sunlight. A remarkable view!

After a successful trip to Cambodia by Frank, DL4KQ (XU7ABR), and his friends, the plan to go to Myanmar slowly developed in 2001. Contacts were made in Myanmar in order to begin the tedious process of getting permission to setup an amateur radio station. Progress was slow, partly due to the difficulties of communicating with Myanmar. E-mail is limited and often telephone and FAX do not work; however, we built upon the experiences, guidelines, and hints of previous DXpeditions and there were no serious problems getting permission. The Burmese authorities were most helpful.

Our group was quite international: Frank, DL4KQ, and his wife Snjeza; Sigg, DL8KBJ; Juergen, DF7KP; Bernd, DL5OAB, and his YL, Martina; Greg, DF2IC; Fabrizio, IN3ZNR, and his wife Fedora; Mauro, IN3BQR; Joe, AA4NN; Hiro, XW0X and his YL, Ing; and Jani, YB0US.

Joe, Hiro, and Jani arrived in Yangon on August 2nd and were joined by the European members on Sunday, August 5th. Our stay in Yangon was organized by MTT (Myanmar Travel and Tours) and they had re-



*Juergen, DF7KP  
Myanmar 2002*

served rooms and a suite at the Inya Lake Hotel, a beautiful place with an easily accessible roof and an antenna tolerant management. A Windom and an end-fed wire for 40 to 10m were up in a few minutes and XY3C and XY5T handled their first pileups.

You cannot go to Myanmar without some sightseeing. We visited countless temples and pagodas, walked through the local markets and enjoyed the palatable Burmese kitchen.

August is monsoon season in Myanmar which means that there is a slight rain shower everyday and

mostly cloudy skies for the rest of the day. This is ideal for sightseeing; however, this description of monsoon does not apply to the coastal region we visited later.

On Tuesday, August 7th, the group took another tour to Bagan where there are countless temples and pagodas, fantastic food, beautiful sunsets over the Ayerwaddy River, and lots of souvenirs. Okay, been there, seen that, got the T-shirt; now we were ready for the pileups!

The group that stayed at the Inya

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## Myanmar.....from page 1

Lake in Yangon had arranged for the transport of the equipment to Ngapali, our beach QTH for the coming two weeks.

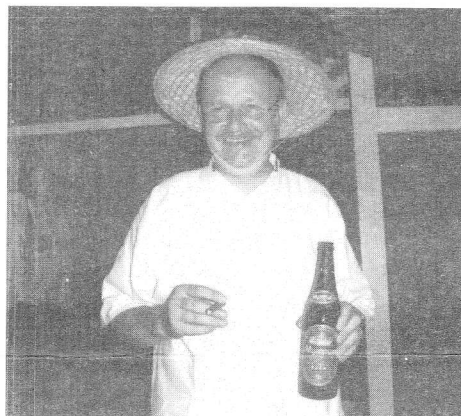
At noon on Friday we arrived at Ngapali and were greeted by the manager and staff of the Linn Thar OO Lodge. The sun was shining and there was a warm breeze from the sea but we should have been suspicious that the manager was wearing a raincoat and after welcoming words each group member was handed an umbrella.

Two rooms, one for CW and the digital modes and one for SSB had been reserved and we quickly began to setup the stations and connect simple end-fed wires to them. The beach looked much different from what we expected from the pictures that YB0US had made in April. Now, most of the sand was washed away and the staff warned us not to setup antennas on the beach because at high tide the waves would sometimes enter the rooms. Behind the lodge, running north to south, is a dam and we planned to put our directive antennas there. Jani, Joe, and I climbed the dam in heavy rain and found it difficult to install antennas on top due to the slippery ground and the long runs of coax we would have to use, so we abandoned the idea. A G5RV was secured between two trees and reached an apex height of about 15 meters. Located only 10 meters from the sea, it worked very well.

Next was the 2-element SteppIR Yagi, an innovative new Yagi design by Fluid-motion, Inc., that we placed on a strip of



*CW Shack*



*Myanmar Beer*

grass between the radio shacks and the beach. It reached a maximum height of about 6 meters. Here we go!

The operation started and Fabrizio and Hiro handled our first EU pileups from the beach. And then the rain set in! Floods that washed the beach away made us soaking wet and prevented outdoor activities. Even by local standards, this was the strongest monsoon in many years. Our clothes were wet and wouldn't dry and Joe and Mauro's leather shoes began to grow mold. Our ladies had it particularly bad. All they could do was sit around listening to music and drinking coffee. We all tried to ignore the rain, but it was there, nagging at our nerves. On the other hand, we found that the restaurant serves very good seafood and the local beer was palatable, even by German standards. Cheerfully, we washed down our daily dose of anti-malaria drugs with Tiger Beer and prayed for better weather.

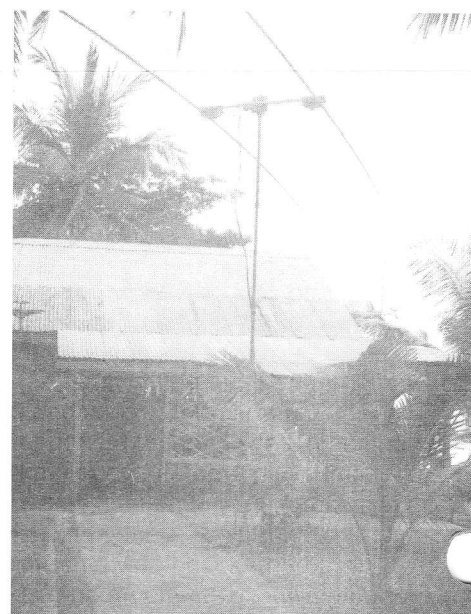
Frank made his first attempt to setup a vertical for the low bands on the beach, secured by heavy ground anchors and extra thick nylon ropes. It worked beautifully for about 3 hours, then a huge trunk from a coconut tree washed in from the sea and smashed it to pieces.

During the night we worked in shifts until about 6:00 a.m. local, then the sun rose and the bands were silent except for some neighboring stations in VU, HS, and the like. In general, the

conditions were fair to good on the bands 20 to 12m, with occasional very long openings on 15 and 17m. The low bands had to be watched constantly for short openings into Europe, and due to the bad weather, we had problems setting up an effective low angle radiator.

There was never time to relax. Things had to be prepared for our expedition to Pearl Island and Frank had to take care of the electricity. With the help of a local civil engineer, he connected a new power line to the shacks, with the effect that afterwards we were able to run three stations with power amplifiers simultaneously. Due to extremely high humidity, the amplifiers occasionally had problems with heavy arcing on the air variable capacitors. It had not stopped raining for more than 24 hours and the hotel staff was out on the beach securing the wooden beach walk with sand sacks and tying up the coconut trees.

We found a place for the 3-element SteppIR Yagi, away from the tide, free standing and within reach for our lengths of coax cable. The rotor was torn into pieces during the first night and we had to use the armstrong method to change directions. Here, the unique design of the SteppIR Yagi was very help-



*SteppIR Yagi*

ful. With a push on a button you changed the beam direction 180°, or changed the beam pattern to bidirectional mode. This was particularly helpful when watching for stateside band openings via longpath. And, the beam worked perfectly!

There were huge pileups on almost all bands except 10m which was almost unusable due to hundreds of band intruders covering most of the band. Instead, 40m turned out to be a very interesting band with a low noise level and very good conditions into Europe in the



*Sommer Yagi*

early morning hours, if only we had a better antenna than the G5RV.

Frank made another heroic attempt to put up a good low band vertical, but this time it only lasted about an hour before a sudden wind gale smashed it to the ground again. So most operation was done on the high bands.

Meanwhile, the spirits were low because of the still unchanged weather and some equipment breakdowns, but stubbornly the gang carried on to do their work and then one morning there came the sun! All of a sudden everyone relaxed, took a dive into the lukewarm Gulf of Bengal and a long sip from a freshly opened coconut.

Greg, DF2IC, and Hiro, XW0X, now had to leave the group and had an adventurous trip back to Yangon: 17 hours in a taxi for about 350 Kms. Hiro stayed at the Inya Lake Hotel again and could resist putting up his station. He operated as XY2EA for two days and

made another 1,000 QSOs.

Back in Ngapali, the group decided to put up the Sommer beam on top of the nearby dam to improve the stateside QSO numbers. To keep coax cable lengths reasonable, we had to move one of the shacks, which wasn't a big problem since we were the only guests at that time. So, for the last week we had three directive antennas for the high bands and, finally, a very well working vertical for the low bands together with the G5RV. Jani was very busy serving the demand for RTTY, PSK31, and Pactor contacts.

Ngapali beach in the sun is a place to remember and is considered to be one of the most beautiful beaches in Southeast Asia. After more than 20,000 QSOs, we had to leave this wonderful place.

The SSB guys made about 60% of the overall contacts, but only because two CW ops had to leave one week earlier.

In order to keep our costs for trans-

portation as low as possible, we left behind most cables and some equipment. One station kept on operating just until an hour before departure.

On the evening before departure our liaison officer and the hotel manager arranged a Burmese style BBQ, a delicious evening and a stylish end for a successful and exciting DXpedition.

A word of thanks to INDEXA and all groups and individuals who supported us. We also thank the authorities in Myanmar for helping us wherever needed.



*Postscript: We recommend visiting Myanmar but we suggest you take an organized tour on your first visit.*

*Also, in Myanmar the cars have the steering wheel on the right side and traffic is also on the right side so we recommend taking a taxi instead of renting a car.*

## **Ron Wright The ZL1AMO Air Ambulance Fund**

On November 15, 2002, the amateur radio community learned that well-known DXer and INDEXA director, Ron Wright, ZL1AMO fell critically ill while operating in Fiji while on his way to C21, Nauru. Ron, diagnosed with pneumonia and collapsed lungs, was placed on life support and several days later was flown by air ambulance to Auckland, New Zealand where he remains hospitalized.

The cost of the emergency air ambulance was \$40,000 NZD or approximately \$20,000 USD. In order to assist the Wright family with mounting medical expenses, INDEXA established the ZL1AMO Air Ambulance Fund and, thanks to the generosity of many in the DX and amateur radio community, INDEXA is within \$5,000 of reaching its goal. If you would like to make a contribution, please mail

your donation to:

**The ZL1AMO Air Ambulance Fund  
c/o Bill Jennings, W4UNP  
Secretary-Treasurer, INDEXA  
P. O. Box 607  
Rock Hill, SC 29731**

Contributions to the fund are not tax deductible.

If you would like to send a card to Ron, please send it in care of his home address:

**Ron Wright, ZL1AMO  
28 Chorley Avenue  
Massey, Auckland, 1008  
New Zealand**

If you would like to send an e-mail, please send it via Ron's daughter, Terri Wright at:  
<T.J.Wright@xtra.co.nz>. Terri prints and delivers all e-mail to her dad.



## 2002-2003 Election Results

President: AA7UC  
Vice-President: WA5PAE  
Secretary-Treasurer: W4UNP

Directors:  
Chairman: W9RG  
DJ9ZB  
LA8CJ  
XE1CI  
ZL1AMO

## XE1CI Board of Directors

In a historic vote, the INDEXA Board of Directors voted to appoint its first YL, XE1CI, to the position of director.

Nellie de Lazard, XE1CI, brings a wealth of administrative and DXpedition experience to the position.

INDEXA will profile Nellie in a future edition of the newsletter; however, in the meantime, when you hear her on the air, welcome her aboard!

## A Note of Appreciation

The family of Murphy G. Ratterree, W4WMQ, founder and president of INDEXA, acknowledges with deep appreciation your kind expressions of sympathy following his passing on 9 September 2002.

Murphy's XYL, Sue, relays the following: "INDEXA was his life; he loved it! Please keep us in your prayers."

The Ratterree Family  
The Galloway Family

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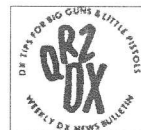
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